



Powerhouse Fire, June 5, 2013
Angeles N.F., Photo by Jeff Brooks

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory California*

June 10, 2013



Subject: Low live and dead fuel moistures, along with persistent drought have created the potential for active to extreme fire behavior in many parts of the state.

Discussion: All of California is experiencing drought conditions. Effects of lower than normal live and dead fuel moistures and observed fire behavior for 2013 are the focus of this advisory.

Difference From Normal Conditions: Drought conditions ranging from abnormally dry to severe exist across California. The drought is expected to persist or intensify. The entire state is deficient in rainfall and snow pack, resulting in fuels that are 4-8 weeks ahead of normal drying/curing rates.

Concerns to Firefighters:

- Energy Release Component (ERC) at numerous weather stations set record highs already this year and running well above normal in most cases. Expect increased fire intensity and spread rates in these areas. Early season extreme fire behavior has been observed in both light and heavy fuels. **Anticipate increased spread rates, spotting, and active night time burning.**
- The combination of persistent drought and record-low rainfall and snowpack amounts has led to very low live and dead fuel moistures. Low 1000-hour fuel moistures have been evidenced by complete consumption of dead fuels on several recent fires. Live fuel moistures have already reached critical levels in many areas especially in Southern California. **Expect fires to ignite easier and spread faster. Anticipate higher resistance to control in all fuel types.**
- Excessively dry fuels and receptive fuel beds are resulting in fire behavior that is not deterred by what firefighters would consider normal barriers. **Be mindful of what you use as a barrier or safety zone.**
- Fires are burning actively even under conditions of high relative humidity. Already this year, California has experienced large fire activity and multiple team deployments. California will likely experience an extended fire season. It is important to be mindful of and manage fatigue for all resources. **Everyone, every day, returns home safely.**

Mitigation Measures:

- Local and inbound fire personnel need to be aware that fire behavior across the state is exceeding normal expectations for this time of the year. **Local briefings need to be thorough and highlight specific fire environment conditions. These include but are not limited to local weather forecasts, Pocket Cards, ERC's, live and dead fuel moistures, and special fuel conditions such as mortality, Sudden Oak Death and frost killed brush, etc.**
- Suppression actions need to be based on good anchor points, escape routes, and safety zones. **Remember LCES. Experienced lookouts are essential under these conditions.**
- **Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.** Augment initial attack resources as incident activity dictates.
- Review the most current Northern and Southern California 7-day Significant Fire Potential along with Daily, Monthly and Seasonal Outlooks at: <http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>

***Area of Concern:** The area of concern is the State of California with the exception of 3 Northern California Predictive Service Areas: North Coast, Northeastern, and Eastside. A map showing the areas of concern described in this advisory can be found at: [National Fuel Advisories](#)

Issued: June 10, 2013 (Note this advisory will be in effect for 14 days and will be reviewed/updated at that time.)